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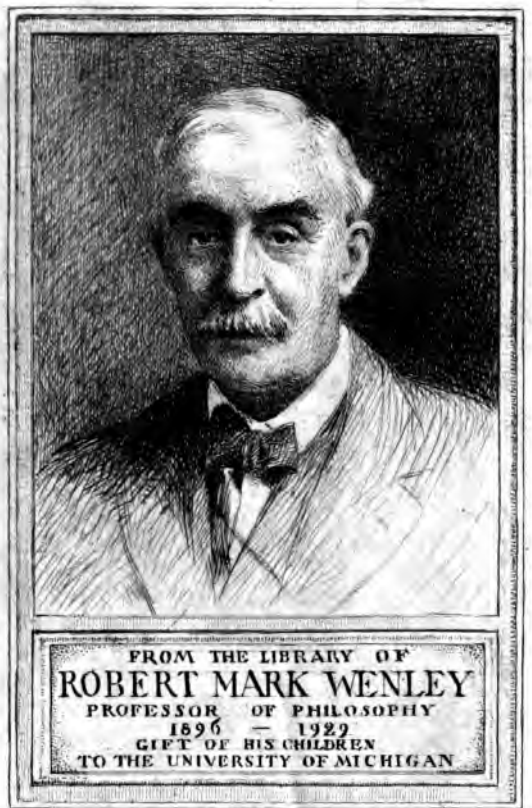

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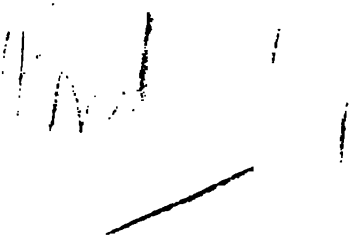

A PLAIN ARGUMENT FOR GOD

BY

GEORGE STUART FULLERTON

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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TO THE MEMORY

OF

MY DEAR FRIEND

BENJAMIN BARTIS COMEGYS, JR.,

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE long been of the opinion that the argument for God, as it is usually presented, gives but little satisfaction to the vast mass of thoughtful men and women who approach the subject with an earnest desire to satisfy not only the demands of the intellect but also of the heart. The language used is so far removed from that of common life as to be not readily intelligible. Some of the arguments put forward seem to the plain man little better than metaphysical quibbles, and if he assents to them it is rather because he already agrees with their conclusion than because he sees their force. The one argument which does appeal to him as simple and natural is presented in such a way as to lead him to a God, not present and living, but of the past.

This, however, is not at all what he has meant by the word God. To him the word has signified a Being in a close personal relation to him, a Father of Spirits, "who is not far from every one of us." The reasoning does not assure him of the existence of the God in whom he has been accustomed to believe, and he has a torturing sense that either he has not grasped the arguments or the foundations of his belief will not bear too much investigation.

Now it is with a conviction that the argument for God's existence can be stated simply and plainly, and in a way to appeal to a thoughtful mind unaccustomed to following the reasonings of the schools, that this little book has been written. It has grown out of three lectures on the subject delivered before the Churchwoman's Institute in Philadelphia in the spring of 1888. The lectures, which many seemed to find helpful, were delivered to an intelligent but a popular audience; and in preparing my thoughts upon the subject for

publication I have had such an audience in view. My endeavor throughout has been to make my thought clear to all persons of fair intelligence who read with any degree of attention and reflection.

As, however, I have to some degree left the beaten track in the endeavor to employ plain and simple language, where it is customary to use what may be called technical terms, I have laid myself open to misunderstanding on the part of those who rest rather in words than in the thought they represent. In the interests of clearness and directness this was unavoidable. I ask, therefore, that my readers try to get a clear view of my thought itself before passing judgment on the argument that follows.

GEORGE STUART FULLERTON.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,
January, 1889.

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A PLAIN ARGUMENT FOR GOD.

CHAPTER I.

The Common Argument.

If we take up what seems the simplest and most natural argument for the existence of God, as we find it presented in most books on the subject, we will see that it argues about as follows:

Things are constantly happening in the world about us. As I look from my window at the autumn landscape, the withered leaves on the trees are now moving and now at rest. In a moment the motion becomes more noticeable, and two or three loose their hold upon the twigs and fall to the ground. Now they are followed by

many more, and those that have fallen flutter here and there, collecting in sheltered corners or whirling about each other in little eddies. Why has this happened? From my window I have seen only the landscape and the leaves: the motion seems to have begun and ended without any reason at all.

But, if I ask even a child why the leaves moved, he answers at once, "Because the wind blew." If I ask him whether they could move if the wind did not blow, he answers without hesitation, "No." As to this particular event, the motion of the dead leaves, his mind is quite made up,—it could not have taken place without some cause. Very likely with this answer he stops thinking about the matter, but his answer has made me reflect. If the wind is the cause of the motion of the leaves, what is the cause of the wind? Could the wind begin to blow without any reason any more than the leaves could move without any reason? And if there must be

some cause why the wind began to blow, what was the cause of that cause? and the cause of that one? and of that one? And if everything that happens must have some cause, must we not, to explain just why the leaves moved as I looked at them, go back and back either without end, or until we find some cause which differs from other things in being the very first, and in not needing a cause at all?

Now, if we go to men of science, we find that they always assume that anything that happens must have *some* cause, even if they do not know what that cause is. In their examination into the secrets of nature they are always looking for causes of what they see, and until they find them they do not pretend to understand what they see. And they are not satisfied with tracing out the causes of things for a little way and then stopping, but they always hold that the last cause which they have found has its cause too, and that the search for causes should never be given up.

Some men, indeed, go so far as to say that this chain of causes is really endless, and that there can be no first cause, for that, like the motion of the leaves, would have to be explained by some cause before it.

Now the argument, which I am discussing, for the existence of God accepts all that is said about the necessity that whatever happens should have its cause, and that cause its cause, and so on; but it insists that this chain of causes cannot be really endless, but must end in a First Cause, which is God; and this it does on the ground that unless we assume a First Cause, we have really no cause at all, but only a series of effects or results, all of which are uncaused.

Having arrived at this point the argument in question goes on to say that everything that happens must have some sufficient cause. We know that if we wish to produce anything we must go about it in the right way, and, if we see

anything happen, we do not simply assume any cause at all, but some cause that we think would naturally produce such a result. When the leaves moved, I explained it by the blowing of the wind, because I knew that the blowing of the wind is a cause which would naturally make the leaves move. And if I see a house in process of building, I never suppose that the blowing of the wind is building the house, because, from all I know of the wind and the house, it seems to me absurd to suppose that the former could produce the latter. What shocks the mind of a grown person in reading such tales as the "Arabian Nights" is simply the disregard of this truth, that causes and effects should be properly proportioned to each other. How the rubbing of a lamp should compel a spirit to obey us we cannot see, nor how a few words pronounced by way of a charm should change a human being into a dog or an ape into a human being. When we say all this is improbable, we

mean that the causes given do not naturally produce the effects ascribed to them, and the sense of unreality this brings into our minds spoils our pleasure in the reading. It is only the child, who has no clear notion of what is natural, and who cannot therefore have any clear notion of what is unnatural, that is not repelled by such improbabilities.

It is for this reason—that causes must be proportioned to effects—that I always assume a builder to explain the building of the house; and if the plan of the house is particularly original and ingenious, I naturally infer that this is due to unusual ability and ingenuity on the part of its author. Every one reasons in this way about common things; and, to use a famous old illustration, no one, finding a watch in a desert place, would suppose that it had any other cause than the mind and hands of some watchmaker,—the only thing we know capable of making a watch. If everything that happens must have a suf-

ficient cause, we say, then the cause assumed, when the thing in question shows plan, must be a reasonable one, a mind, as the only thing capable of planning. Otherwise, you fall into the absurdities of the "Arabian Nights;" for is it more absurd to assume that a brazen horse can rise into the air through a man's mounting it, than to assume that a thing that shows plan can be brought about by a creature incapable of planning?

If, now, we look at the world about us, do we not find on every side evidences of adaptation and apparent purpose? Are not means fitted to ends through the whole domain of nature? and can we open our eyes without having forced on our attention mechanisms of the most marvellous intricacy and complexity? Which is the more remarkable in its structure and workings, a watch or a human body? And if we find that a human body is not, considered in itself alone, a complete thing at all, but like a watch without its key, quite

useless, unless we suppose it in relation to the other things in nature,—food, water, air, all of which it needs in order to subsist and be serviceable; and if we then pass on to the reflection that everything in nature is in this way related to the whole of nature, as a part of it, so that we must look upon nature as a unit, a harmonious whole, full of meaning and plan and purpose;—if we do this, and then go back to the cause of all this, must we not infer that there is but one First Cause, wise as well as powerful, who is the Author of this harmonious plan, and the source of all its workings?

But there is one further step in the argument. Suppose that in looking about in the world we find, not only that things seem very wisely adapted to attain their ends, but that they seem on the whole to work together for good: that the ends for which nature seems to strive appear to be good ends. And suppose that from such an observation of nature we turn away

with the conviction that the system of things as a whole is good, and contains a certain moral order or plan. Now, if it is reasonable to argue that, when the things we see indicate a plan, we may infer as their cause a Mind, is it not reasonable to argue further that, when the things we see indicate not only a plan but a good plan, —I mean morally good,—we may infer as their author a Good Mind? That is to say, may we not infer such a Being as we mean when we use the word God?

With this ends the famous "Argument from Design," as it is called, to prove the existence of God.

You will notice that the argument thus stated has two main divisions. The one argues from what happens to a First Cause, without inquiring as to the character of that cause. The other passes from the *nature* of what is to be explained, the world, to the nature of the First Cause as intelligent and good, and so comes to a God. The argument is an old one, and

has had the assent of many great minds. It should be carefully weighed by every one.

Nevertheless, I should like any fair-minded man, who has already been a believer in God, and has felt His presence in the world, to ask himself whether this reasoning just satisfies the demands of his religious nature. Has it made God any more real to him, to have followed the argument? Quite apart from the fact that an important part of the argument, the inference to a First Cause on the ground that the series of causes cannot be conceived as endless, is not unhesitatingly admitted by every one,—quite apart from this fact, and supposing the argument faultless in every particular, does it not still set God at the end of a vista which puts Him out of the present religious experience of the man who is seeking Him? Suppose some one to whom he should present this argument were to say, "I admit all that. I believe God created the world and set

nature in motion, but I believe that there His contact with the world ceased. There is no evidence that He is now in personal relation with me. His action is of the past, and not of the present." How could our argument for God answer this? If our champion should try to answer it by pointing to God's goodness as seen in the world to-day, would not his opponent at once suggest that, according to his own arguments, to prove God the author of this goodness he must go back to a First Cause, and infer that this First Cause is good? And would not this be in fact admitting that the only *provable* cause of anything is a God acting in the past? and a very distant past at that?

There have been men who have argued in just the spirit of this objection concerning God and His relation to the world. Their reasonings have not been regarded as satisfactory to the religious nature of man, nor have their results been widely accepted. The teaching of the Church,

taking that word in the broadest sense possible, has always been *Theistic*, while this view of things is *Deistic*. I had not intended to use in this discussion any of those words which belong more properly to the schools than to the language of common life, but it is convenient to use these two, as they mark an important distinction, and one which we will do well to keep in mind. I shall try to make their meaning quite plain. Both words have the same derivation from the word God, but one is from the Greek word and one from the Latin. Both words are used in somewhat varying senses, but one sense in which they have been used, and the sense in which I shall use them, distinguishes between them in this way. Both the Deist and the Theist are believers in a God in some sense of the term, but the Deist believes in a God only as First Cause, as source of things, while the Theist believes in a God as also preserver and governor of things,—a God *now* re-

vealed in nature and now and always in personal relation to man. Of course it follows, that it is only upon the latter view, the Theistic, that religion, in any proper sense of the term, is possible. There can be no communion with God, if God is in no present relation with the world in which one lives.

Now, if you have followed with care the argument for God with which this chapter has been taken up, you must see that, standing as it does, it proves what the Deist holds, but it does not seem to go on to prove what the Theist wishes to believe. I hope you will not for a moment understand me to say that the writers who have brought it forward, and who still bring it forward, are not Theists, and perhaps very earnest Theists. But I am quite willing to say, and I think you will agree with me in saying, that they are Theists, not because of their argument, but in spite of it. They are Theists, I suppose, because the world in which we live is always offering

to one whose eyes, like the wise man's, are in his head, a much more natural and simple argument for God, and one which does not go back for a sight of God to the creation of the world and the beginnings of time. Of this argument I will speak in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II.

The Search for Mind.

BEFORE asking ourselves whether we can find God in nature, and, if so, how, it would be well to have a clear idea of what we are looking for when we seek Him there. If we do not, must not our search be a random one? and may it not possibly turn out to be conducted on a quite false and fruitless method? If by the word God I do not mean a thing that can be seen with the eyes or touched with the fingers,—a material thing,—and if nevertheless I look through nature for God with the methods of physical science, which are adapted to finding material things, must not my search, however thorough, be necessarily fruitless? And if, after searching for God in this way, I fail to find Him, does that give me the right to say that I am now certain He does not

exist? Until I have some notion of what it is that I mean by the word God, I am in no position to prove either that He exists or that He does not, for I have no idea in what direction to turn for my proofs.

Now, without going into disputed points, but confining ourselves to what all reasonable men will admit, we may safely say thus much: by the word God we at least signify a Mind, a Person; and the question whether God can be found in nature is at bottom the question whether mind is revealed in nature,—a mind which is yet not your mind or mine, but something much greater and more comprehensive; but, still, always a mind. If, then, the search for God is a search for mind, we must conduct it as we usually conduct the search for minds, and in no other way. It is with the question of how we commonly conduct this search for minds, and what we mean when we say we have found one, that this chapter is concerned.

It is now admitted on all hands that the

minds with which infants appear upon this mortal stage have been much overrated, not merely by their mothers, as is perhaps natural, but by the world at large. The little creature which blinks and stares with its face towards the light is commonly supposed to see objects much as we do; and when it jerks about in its aimless way its small arms and legs, it is supposed to have a fair knowledge of what they are and of the fact that they belong to it. When it starts at hearing a sound, we are apt to imagine that the sensation has to it somewhat the same significance that it has to us, who have heard sounds and connected them with objects around us for many years. This reputation for intelligence would seem to have been gained somewhat as the stupid man gained his reputation for profound wisdom, by a policy of strict silence. The students of mind in children are beginning to find out that it is about as well founded as that, and that the mental furniture of a very young in-

fant is scanty to a degree which we have not heretofore suspected. They are beginning, too, to give us some account of the growth of what, starting in such poverty, may end in the wealth of knowledge and wisdom of a Newton or a Kant.

It will not take a great deal of reflection to show any one that their statements are reasonable, and that a mind beginning to feel and to think must begin in a very small way. I will take an illustration and see if I cannot make this clear. As I write, there is lying on my desk before me an apple. I say this, although I have not touched it, or smelt it, or tasted it. I have only seen it. Moreover, I see it only from the one side, so that I only see a small part of what I could see if I were to turn it over and around and look at every part of it. And when I call it an apple, I have some notion that if I were to cut it in two I should see white instead of red, with a little black or brown in the centre where I believe the seeds to be. Just notice how

much more is in my mind about the apple than what I actually see. I actually see only a little patch of red color of a certain shape, and I supply from my past experience of apples all the rest,—the idea that if I were to turn it round I could see the other parts of it, the idea of the white flesh, the idea of the seeds. Is it reasonable to suppose that I could have supplied all this if I had not had any past experience of apples? And when we go on to the touch qualities of the apple, its hardness and smoothness, its weight, and all the rest; and from these to the taste and the smell,—how is it that as soon as I see that little patch of red color on the table in front of me I think of all these, and connect them with the apple? Hardness is not anything like color, nor is weight, nor is taste, nor any of the rest. I certainly do not see them. Why do I believe them there? Is it not because, although these qualities are all unlike each other, yet I have always found in my past experience

that they are grouped in nature, and that when I can see the color I can if I choose feel the hardness or weight, or smell or taste the apple? If all my life I had only seen objects and never touched them, would I have any reason to believe that in addition to the sensation of color I now experience I could also have experiences of touch and taste and smell? And if the idea of an apple is made up of all these experiences together, could I, in the case I have supposed, get any true idea of an apple at all by just seeing one before me?

Now suppose an infant in its nurse's arms brought close up to my desk, and placed in front of the apple so that it cannot help seeing its color. Suppose that it is still so young that it has not had much experience of the fact that when certain sensations of color enter its small mind, certain sensations of touch can be made to enter too,—that is, that things seen can also be touched. Will not in such a case

the sensation of color stand quite by itself and disconnected from any thought of any further experience? And if the child is to have any notion of an apple as we know apples, with all their different qualities, must not this knowledge grow up gradually, from an experience in which one sensation accompanies another again and again until the mind learns to connect them, and learns to expect to find them always together? This reasoning is applied also to the child's knowledge of its own body, and it is held that it is unreasonable to suppose that an infant knows that the little white object that it sees in front of its face when it waves its hand about, is *its hand*,—that is, a thing that can be touched as well as seen, and can touch as well as be touched. As soon as we see a hand we of course think of all this, but we do this because we have had a long experience of hands, and this experience the infant has not had.

From all this it is evident that when

sensations first come to the mind of an infant they do not mean much. It does not know what they signify. And it is evident, too, that the growth of its mind means not only the having of more and more sensations, but also a discovery of their meaning,—that is, a discovery of the fact that they are connected in certain fixed ways which will allow the mind to make inferences from sensations now present to sensations which are not now present. A burnt child, it is said, dreads the fire, and this simply means that a child which has once seen the fire and felt it knows when it sees it another time, and without having to feel it again, that this particular sensation of color and form may be followed by a sensation of quite a different kind, which it is particularly anxious not to have. The sensation, you see, has gained a meaning, because it has become connected with another sensation. It is now known that the fire which is seen can burn. So it is that the child connects feel-

ing with feeling, until what was at first a mere string of disconnected and unmeaning sensations grows into an orderly and meaning-full world of things.

Suppose further that the child has by this time gained some acquaintance with its own body and with the things about it. It knows its own hand now when it sees it: it knows that this is a thing that can be touched as well as seen, and that can touch other things which can be seen. Now it discovers that the hand is a thing of a different kind from the apple. Both can be seen and touched, but when the apple is touched by anything the result is not just the same as when the hand is. One may cut into the apple or crush the apple, and it makes little difference, but if one cut into the hand or crush the hand it matters very much. The one object is by no means so important to the child's mind, nor so closely connected with its mind, as is the other. When the apple is cut there is no pain, and when the hand is cut there

is pain. When the apple is seen to roll against some other object and touch it, the child only sees it,—that is, it has only a sensation of sight; but when its hand is seen to touch another object, the child not only sees it but feels it; it has an added sensation of touch. By remembering such experiences and comparing them the child gradually learns that this particular object, its own body, is an object with which are somehow connected pleasure and pain, and even the possibility of knowing about other objects and of acting upon them by its will, as all these things are not connected with other objects. Though it is quite unable to put the information into words, it is finding out that its body is an object with which is somehow connected a mind.

But in the world about the child are a number of objects which are more or less like its own body. Its nurse and its mother have bodies like its own, and these it can see as it sees its own. As it comes

to know more and more about things, it learns to distinguish these from the other things about it and to class them as things of a kind with its own body. And as it finds in its own experience that certain states of mind, say pains or pleasures, are always present when its body goes through certain motions or is affected in certain ways, and learns to connect these states of mind with these bodily actions or conditions; so, when it sees the same actions or conditions in the bodies of its nurse and mother, it at once calls up in memory these states of mind and connects them in thought with these other bodies too. The child first observes, you see, that when its own body is injured there is a feeling of pain, and then goes on to the belief that when certain other bodies which are like its own are similarly injured, here, too, the injury is not like an injury done to a chair or table, but results in pain,—that is, it affects a *mind.* Not that the child sees or feels the pain itself, or can

by any possibility be made to see or feel directly this other mind; but it interprets what it does see, and the most natural interpretation of what it sees is, that there is revealed by these other bodies a something like what it experiences in connection with its own body, a mind with its sensations.

Keep in mind the fact that all that the child can know of these other minds is what it can read into them by interpreting the motions of their bodies,—their gestures, their facial expressions, their words. It can never directly perceive any mind but its own. It must guess the mind from the body. Perhaps another illustration will serve to make this more clear.

Suppose a child to see for the first time a smile upon its mother's face. Now a smile is surely not anything like the feeling of love that prompts a smile. No one can see a feeling of love, and one can see a smile. The one is in the mother's mind, and the other is on the mother's face.

How is the child to know what the smile that it sees means? How can it tell that this expression indicates a thing so unlike itself, and a thing which must always remain unseen? Is there any other way for it to discover the meaning of the smile than to notice some time when it is smiling itself what feeling prompts a smile, and then, having learned from its own body the meaning of this new action, to interpret the smile by this same feeling when it sees it in another body? But if a child could grow up without ever having had in any degree at all the feeling of love, could it ever form any idea at all of the meaning of expressions of love on the part of those about it? It would still see the bodily actions, and the expressions of the face, and hear the words, but would not the whole language of affection be as totally beyond it as is a message in cipher to a man who has lost the key? Remember, the feeling itself in the mind of another we can never see as we see the

face of another. We must call it up in memory to connect it with this or that other body; and how can we call up in memory what we have never felt? It is quite impossible to explain to a man who has always been blind what a color is, and this is because, although he can hear our explanations very well, there is in his experience nothing that he can call up in response to the words, which would truly correspond to what is in our minds when we speak them. To get at our thought, since he cannot see it directly, he must interpret our words in thoughts of his own; and he fails, because when we speak of colors he cannot call up in his memory any sensations of color, and the words remain mere words to him. He will never find out what is in our minds when we utter them.

This fact, then, is sufficiently clear: that when a man says that another man's mind is revealed to him by his words and actions, he can only mean that he observes

such and such motions in the other man's body, and, having learned from his own body what thoughts and feelings accompany what bodily actions, he interprets in this language learned from himself what he sees, and thus builds up for himself in his imagination a picture of the other man's mind. No one gets nearer to another mind than this his own picture of it. As he interprets what he sees in the other body well or ill, his knowledge of the other mind will be true and complete, or false and incomplete. If he does the work very well he will have a good accurate knowledge of the other mind; but, however accurate, it is always his own picture of it that he has, and nothing else.

Now it is not only to the knowledge of other *men's* minds that we come in this way, but to the knowledge of all minds whatever. Indeed, it is to just this experience that we refer when we use the phrase "another mind" at all. Why do I believe

that a dog has a mind, unless because I have seen in his actions what is best interpreted by my own experience of hope, or fear, or anger, or love? Why do I speak of one horse as more intelligent than another, unless because I see in his actions something more analogous to actions of my own? Why do I say that it is doubtful whether a sponge has a mind at all, unless because I see in it so little that is like my experience of my own body, that I find almost nothing that needs interpretation in terms of thought and feeling and will? In none of these instances do I see any mind at all directly and immediately. The nature of my reasoning is precisely the same in all cases. Where I find traces of what I have learned to regard as indications of thought or feeling or will, I infer mind; and I try to build up for myself as good an idea as I can of what the mind is like. Upon the indications will depend my opinion as to whether the mind is a wise one or a weak one, a clear one or a

dim one. For me these bodily indications, and they alone, are the index of another mind. Other minds can be reached only through these.

I spoke a little while ago of bodies as "revealing" mind. The meaning of this word is now, I hope, unmistakable. Of course it cannot mean that we find mind on the surfaces of bodies, as we find colors; nor in bodies, as the seeds are in an apple. The most foolish man will hardly expect to see his friend's mind as he sees his friend's wig. Nor do we mean that the minds *are* the bodies, for then why should we single out these particular bodies, as bodies with minds, and distinguish them from bodies without minds? and why should we class them with our own bodies, which we certainly distinguish from our minds? No! when we speak of bodies as revealing mind, we simply mean that we observe in them certain signs or marks which experience of our bodies has taught us to recognize as signs of thought

or feeling or will, and that we can build up a picture of these minds by interpreting these signs.

As it happens, we have been building up in this way ideas of other minds all our lives, so that the process has become very rapid and easy,—so rapid and so easy that we never think of the steps of the process at all, but, like the practised reader, who is absorbed in the thought of his book and hardly notices the letters, pass on at once from the signs to the things signified, and seem to have at once before us the complete thought of another mind. Nevertheless, rapid or slow, conscious or unconscious, this is the process we actually go through with every time we find another mind. This is what we mean when we speak of finding a mind; and it will easily be seen that a search for a mind, which starts out with the supposition that it is to be sought for in some other direction,—perhaps as an object immediately perceived in the world around us,—is very likely to

be a disappointing search. Quite as disappointing as the one in which Swift's worthy persevered for so many years,—the search for a method of extracting sunbeams from cucumbers.

CHAPTER III.

God in Nature.

I HOPE it is quite clear from the reasoning of the last chapter, that when we say we have found a mind we never mean that we have seen one directly or touched one. And I hope it is equally clear that we look for minds of all kinds in just the same way, by interpreting the signs of mind that we see in bodies, and thus building up some idea of the minds revealed by those bodies. In the last chapter I referred, in illustration of this latter point, only to cases in which the mind inferred is inferior to the mind of man,—as in the dog or the horse. But there is no reason at all why we should not in just the same way infer higher minds if we find anywhere in our experience the marks or signs which can best be interpreted as revealing higher minds. When a child stands before his

father and listens to his words, he certainly gains some notion that his father has a mind, and a mind superior to his own. He knows very well that he cannot entirely comprehend that mind, nor know all that there is to be known about it, but he knows well enough that the play of feature that he sees, and the words he hears, indicate mind, and a mind higher and broader than his mind.

Is it not a matter of every-day experience that some of the men we meet impress us with a sense of our own mental inferiority? Why is this, except that we see in their words and actions what will necessitate a recognition of higher minds than our own? All men may be born free, but they are certainly not born equal in mental ability any more than in physical stature; and yet, just as the abler man builds up for himself an idea of the inferior mind, so the inferior man builds up for himself an idea of the higher mind, and recognizes that it is above him. And as a

man of less ability can do this with respect to the mind of a Newton, so he could do it with respect to the mind of some being higher than man if he found anywhere indications of that mind as he finds indications of mind in another man's body. If I were to meet somewhere a being differing as much from man in the one direction as do the horse and the dog in the other, and if a careful observation of the actions of this being were to show me that these actions are analogous with those by which my own mental states are expressed, but that they are more complex than my actions, and differ from them somewhat as my actions differ from those of the lower animals,—if my observation were to show me all this, would not I naturally and at once assume that this being possessed a mind? Would not I think of this mind as like mine, in so far as it was a mind, but different from mine in being higher? Differences in the signs to be interpreted of course necessitate differences in the interpretation.

And if, after I had met the being of which I have spoken, I should meet another being whose actions put him still higher in the scale, should I not set to work to build up for myself an idea of his mind, reasoning in the same way, and making my idea of his mind different from my idea of the former one, according to the differences that I find in the actions to be interpreted? There is only one limit that can be set to this way of reasoning, and that is this: The ground upon which I go in my reasoning always is, as you have seen, that I have found in my own experience of my body that certain signs in the body always signify certain states of mind, and when I see such signs or something like them in another body, I infer such states of mind or something like them in another mind. Now, as the signs which I see in another body differ more and more from the signs of which I have learned the meaning in my own, I infer that the mental states differ correspond-

ingly. And if the difference should go to such a point that the marks seen in another body should not resemble at all the signs that I have come to look upon as a revelation of mind, then, of course, I should have no reason at all to infer a mind like mine, or anything like it. But up to this limit the reasoning holds good; wherever I see signs of mind I may infer mind, and my belief as to the character of the mind may justly rest upon the nature of the signs.

Now to apply this argument to God. From the earliest times thoughtful men have been impressed with the fact that nature reveals a Mind, as well as minds. When we look about us we discover minds of many orders in men and the lower animals, each revealed by that little mass of organized matter that we call an animal body. But, as I have suggested in the first chapter, when we come to examine one of these bodies more closely we find that it is not really an independent thing at

all, but only a part of the great system of nature, and bound to all other things by natural laws. The body in question must depend for its subsistence upon the other things around it. It was produced from them, and after it is dissolved its particles will be scattered to them again. Birth and growth, and decay and death, are a part of the general plan of things in nature; and this particular body belongs to that plan and must obey its laws. In order that this body might live and move at this present moment, the forces of nature must have been active before its birth, and these forces must themselves have depended upon other forces obeying natural laws; and so we might go to every part of the great world of things and find that had this particular body been different even in one little point, perhaps all its past causes would have had to be different, and all other bodies would have had to be different too. The very words "a system of nature" indicate that things do not exist

in the world each for itself, but that the universe has in it something analogous to a human body, in that all its parts have relation to all its other parts, and gain their significance through their place in the system.

While I reason in this way I must recognize that my own body is a part of this system, and that my own mind is too. If another body strikes against my body I feel a pain in my mind, and if it had not struck against it I would not have felt the pain. And when I strike another man's body I feel pretty sure that, if he has any mind at all, I can cause a pain in that mind. Minds and living bodies and other bodies all together form one system of things, which, taking the word in its widest sense, I can call nature.

Here at once there arises in my mind a very natural question. What kind of a thing is this one being of which I find myself to be a part, and which I know as nature? In one respect I know it is like

my own body, in that it is composed of parts knit together into a system. But is it like my body in another thing, and a very important thing,—does this vast organism reveal Mind in the same general way in which my body reveals mind, and other men's bodies reveal mind? Is a Mind revealed by the whole of nature, as minds are by some of its parts? And can we by interpreting the signs of Mind as seen in the whole of nature gain some just idea of the attributes of that Mind? The problem, you see, is precisely similar to the one that meets us every time that we see the body of another man. Shall we infer mind? and if so, what kind of a mind? So here; shall we infer Mind? and if so, what kind of a Mind? The mass of reflective men in all ages are impelled to answer: "Yes, the world is full of reason, and plan, and marvellous adaptation; we may infer Mind, and we cannot set limits to its powers."

Now, to ask a man, who has expressed

this conviction, to show us this Mind, in any other way than to point out the marks which reveal it, is manifestly just as absurd as it would be to ask him to point out the mind of another man. He can show you the body of the man, and he can show you how reasonably the body acts, but more than this he cannot do, and more than this you cannot expect of him. It seems fair to ask you to be as just to the great Mind of which we are speaking, as you are to other minds, and to content yourself with evidence of the same nature. The question is simply, whether the system of things as a whole indicates reason, or does not. If you decide that it does, does this not end the matter?

But you may object, and rightly, that there is still some ambiguity in the phrase "to reveal mind," insomuch as the phrase is often used in two quite distinct senses. Sometimes we say that a watch reveals mind, when we do not mean at all that the watch has the mind, but that the

watchmaker, who made it, has. In one sense of the word "reveal," the watch reveals mind, and in another sense, the watchmaker does. In which of these senses does nature reveal mind? as a something that leads one to infer mind in a something else that has preceded it or is connected with it? or as a something that reveals mind directly through itself, as a man's body reveals his mind? Let us see.

How do we come to believe that such a thing as a watch reveals mind at all? We certainly do not come to the belief by observing that the actions of the watch are like our own actions, and then inferring that they have the same meaning as expressions of mind. We reason in this way about the watchmaker, but not about the watch. About the watch we reason as follows: We know by experience that our own bodies can act upon other things about us, and change their character and arrangement. We know, too, that we can

form a plan in our minds of the way in which we would like to arrange the bodies around us, and can then, through the actions of our bodies, impress upon them this plan. When we observe the bodies of other men, we see that things acted upon by their bodies seem to be arranged according to plan too, or, to speak more strictly, seem to be arranged as they are arranged after we have acted upon them through our bodies and impressed upon them the plan in our minds. For instance, if I find it inconvenient to shelter myself from the rain in a hollow tree, and form an idea of some other shelter which would be better, and then make a frame of poles and cover it with thatch, I know very well that the arrangement of the poles and the straw is somehow connected with the plan in my mind, and realize that if the plan had been different the structure would have been different. And when I observe the body of another man going through the motions of building a similar structure,

and at last see the completed hut, I cannot help seeing that the result is of the same sort as what I brought about myself. When I realize this, I cannot help thinking that the thing indicates a plan in his mind, since a similar thing was the expression of a plan in mine. I never think of connecting the plan immediately with the hut, but with the man who built it; and when I say the hut indicates plan or purpose, I mean only that it has marks about it which would lead me to suppose, even if I should find it now ready made and in a desert, that it has had a certain connection with a human body, and that that human body has had in the mind connected with it a plan of the hut.

So that there is this very important difference between the two senses of the word in which the watch and the watchmaker can be said to "reveal" mind. In the case of the man, we can say that mind is revealed as directly and immediately as it is possible for another mind to be re-

vealed; and that this revelation does not imply any other object existing before the man, in which the mind is revealed, but it is revealed here and now in him. In the case of the watch, some other object is implied, in which the mind is more immediately revealed, and to which the watch refers us. In every case our ultimate reference is to the more immediate revelation of mind as we find it in the man. Objects which reveal mind as the watch does, are simply objects which we recognize as having a certain connection with objects that reveal mind as men do.

I ask, then, in which of the two senses of the word does nature as a whole reveal mind? If it really reveals mind at all it must be in one of the two senses, for there are only these two. If nature reveals mind as a watch does, you must mean by this that you are able to go back from what you see now to something else that reveals mind more immediately and directly, just as to explain the watch you go

back to the revelation of mind' in the watchmaker. But have we any reason to believe that by going back farther and farther we will find mind revealed more directly than we do in the world as we see it now? Can we expect, passing from present nature, which we regard as only the watch, the mindless object arranged by mind, to come to a something which will stand before us as showing mind in this higher sense? Surely nature, this great complex of which we ourselves are a part, is quite as wonderful and as full of reason to-day as it has ever been in the past. Surely there is no ground to expect that by going back we will ever find a time when we can say: "Now I have passed from the watch to the watchmaker, and here I may stop in my search for mind." And if the Mind which is revealed in nature is as immediately revealed here and now as it can be anywhere else or at any other time; if, that is, we regard all nature, in all times, as revealing Mind in the same

way, and not as referring us back to something else, should we not look upon nature, not as we do upon the watch, but rather as we do upon the watchmaker? as we do upon the man standing in front of us, and now revealing his present mind through words and actions? Why should we look upon the world as an automaton, whose connection with mind is not of the present but of the past? Is not Reason now active about us as well as in us? Why banish it from the world in which we live?

Now the name which men have applied to the Mind which is revealed in nature, and in every part of nature, is God. And the view of things which would look upon the world as we do upon the watch, referring its revelation of mind to the past, as I have shown is done by the argument which we discussed in the first chapter, is simply a view which puts God altogether out of the present world, and lets us see in the present world only the results of His

former activity. But how near would you feel to another man if you knew that you could never get nearer to him than merely to discover indications that at some past time he had thought, or felt, or acted? When one reads a book by a man long dead it is not the same as when one sees before him his friend, and speaks, and is answered, knowing that mind reflects mind as closely as mind can reflect mind. And is it any more satisfactory for the soul that cries out for God to be referred to the beginnings of the world and a First Cause of things? Can he get no nearer to the Divine than that? The arguments for God as usually stated do not seem to bring him any nearer, but, fortunately for man, his inmost convictions are sometimes more reasonable and more true than his attempts to justify his convictions; and, in spite of arguments, the religious mind has always felt somehow much nearer to God. Men have recognized in the daily experiences of their own souls the present goodness

of God. They have seen in the rich beauty and admirable arrangement of this great world what has made quite credible to them the conception of a Mind so embracing the whole of things as to contain in its plan the fall of a sparrow or the robing of a flower. If I should ask you to abandon the groping for God in the dim and distant past, or at least to supplement it by looking for God in the present too, I should not be asking you to accept a new way of finding Him in the world. I should only be asking you to make clear to yourself the way in which you have always found Him there: to realize that the lack of clearness and consistency in your thought has sometimes led you to be much more unjust to the Mind in nature than you have been to the little minds in nature. That you should reason about them in just the same way was well recognized in the last century by that brilliant scholar and charming gentleman Bishop Berkeley, whose works deserve more atten-

tion than the men of our day allot them. I cannot do better than to close this chapter with a sentence from his gifted pen on our knowledge of God and man:

"Hence it is plain that we do not see a man,—if by *man* is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do,—but only such a certain collection of ideas* as directs us to think there is a distinct principle of thought and motion, like to ourselves, accompanying and represented by it. And after the same manner we see God; all the difference is that, whereas some one finite and narrow assemblage of ideas denotes a particular human mind, whithersoever we direct our view, we do at all times and in all places perceive manifest tokens of the Divinity,—everything we see, hear, feel, or anywise perceive by sense, being a sign or effect of the power of God; as is our perception of those very motions which are produced by men."

* By "ideas" Berkeley here means simply bodily qualities.

CHAPTER IV.

The Witness of Literature.

I PROPOSE in the present chapter to give a few extracts from literature to show that the argument for God which I have given, and the way of looking at God's relation to the world which I have advocated, are in no sense new or strange, but on the contrary so natural that men have always, though sometimes inconsistently and often unconsciously, held to them and rested upon them. I shall give a very few extracts, though I might give very many; and I shall take them almost at random, for in such a wealth of material it is hard to choose.

The first are from the account given by Xenophon of a conversation which Socrates, the great pagan moralist, held with Aristodemus the Little. It would seem that this Aristodemus objected to offering

prayers and sacrifices himself, and ridiculed those who did offer them. Socrates points out to him at length the evidences of intelligence and of benevolent purpose to be seen in the structure of man's own body, and then the dialogue continues:

"'And do you think that you yourself have any portion of intelligence?' 'Question me, at least, and I will answer.' 'And can you suppose that nothing intelligent exists anywhere else? When you know that you have in your body but a small portion of the earth, which is vast, and a small portion of the water, which is vast, and that your frame is constituted for you to receive only a small portion of each of other things that are vast, do you think that you have seized for yourself, by some extraordinary good fortune, intelligence alone which exists nowhere else, and that this assemblage of vast bodies, countless in number, is maintained in order by something void of reason?' 'By Jupiter, I can hardly suppose that there is any ruling

intelligence among that assemblage of bodies, for I do not see the directors, as I see the agent of things which are done here.' 'Nor do you see your own soul, which is the director of your body; so that, by like reasoning, you may say that you yourself do nothing with understanding, but everything by chance.'"

* * * * * * *

"'Consider also, my good youth,' continued Socrates, 'that your mind, existing within your body, directs your body as it pleases; and it becomes you therefore to believe that the intelligence pervading all things directs all things as may be agreeable to it, and not to think that while your eye can extend its sight over many furlongs, that of the divinity is unable to see all things at once, or that while your mind can think of things here or things in Egypt or Sicily, the mind of the deity is incapable of regarding everything at the same time.'"*

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* I quote from Watson's version. *Memorabilia*, Book I. chap. iv.

It is sufficiently evident from this that Socrates looked upon the mind in nature as revealed after the same manner as the mind connected with a human body,—that is, he believed it to be revealed as directly as one mind can be revealed to another. His conception is in perfect harmony with the idea of God presented in the preceding chapters, and we may see from his life that he lived in the realization of an intimate relation with the Divine. He was a pagan, and seems also to have believed in the gods of the popular mythology; but it would appear that this belief was subordinate to his constant recognition of the all-pervading Mind. He certainly believed in a present God.

If we turn from pagan literature to Jewish, we may almost take that bodily as an illustration of the fact that men have thought of God as revealed at once in nature, as ever present in the world, and not to be found merely at the end of an indefinite regress into the past. The whole

teaching of the Old Testament is of a God in the closest and most intimate relation to nature, and whose thought and purpose can be read in the order and changes of things. The book of the Psalms is full of passages which give expression to this thought in forms of the highest beauty. Can any other view of God be reconciled with the spirit of the one hundred and fourth psalm?

"He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

"Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

"The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

"The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

"Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labor until the evening.

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

"So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

"There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

"These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

"That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

"Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

"Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

"The glory of the Lord shall endure forever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works.

"He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

"I will sing unto the Lord as long as I

live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

"My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."

And would the trust and confidence of the twenty-third psalm seem natural in one who did not feel God very near to him? In the Hebrew scriptures, surely this view of God as now seen through nature is to be found.

And what shall we say to the teachings of the New Testament from beginning to end? What can be plainer than this:

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

"And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

This certainly does not read as if our evidence for God directed us always to the past, and away from the world that is. Nor is St. Paul at the Areopagus less clear in his teaching:

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

"Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the

times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

One cannot feel that he lives, and moves, and has his being in that which he can only reach by going back to the creation of the world. The words denote the most intimate relation between man's life and God.

The devotional literature of the Christian church is pervaded with the same spirit. This is well shown in the collects in the Book of Common Prayer:

"O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; We humbly beseech thee, to put away from us all hurtful things, and to

give us those things which are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"O Lord, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succor, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is but natural to find the language of worship expressing such a view of God, for, as I have said before, religion, in any true sense of the word, would hardly seem possible to one who believed in a God in no close relation to him and to the world. The religious mind tends to regard nature as did George Herbert:

"O sacred Providence, who from end to end
Strongly and sweetly movest! shall I write,
And not of Thee, through whom my fingers bend
To hold my quill? Shall they not do Thee right?"

Here nature is not separated from God as a thing at a distance. God is found in and through nature, giving nature meaning

and worth. It was thus that Coleridge saw God in the world:

"Thou first and chief, sole Sovereign of the Vale,
O struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink;
Companion of the Morning-star at dawn,
Thyself earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald: wake, O wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in earth?
Who fill'd thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

"And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who called you forth from night and utter death?
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
Forever shattered, and the same forever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder, and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen and have rest?

"Ye Ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain,—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty Voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!

Motionless torrents! Silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven,
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?—
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing, ye meadow-streams, with gladsome voice,
Ye pine groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds.
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

"Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain-storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the element!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!"

This is the view of nature held by the religious mind, as I have said, in all ages. It might be illustrated by countless citations, but I will give no more. Those who have held it have not always clearly comprehended its significance, nor have they seen that their formal reasonings were not

always in sympathy with it. Nevertheless they held it, and lived by it, and gained great comfort from it, as do multitudes to-day, who according to their formal arguments have no right to such comfort at all. It is one thing to have a belief, and another to be able to put it into a formula or reason about it.

CHAPTER V.

Theism or Pantheism.

ALTHOUGH the religious literature of the past and the present seems to testify to the fact, that the way of finding God in the world which I have presented is natural to men, yet it is quite possible that when you think about it you are at first repelled by it. "You wish me to look upon the world," you say, "as revealing God, as a man's body reveals his mind. Is not this a strange conception,—the world the *body* of God? Has God a body? Is the world, then, God?" I will answer this by making clear what this view of God really implies, and what it does not.

And first I must distinguish between Theism and what is known as Pantheism. When I explained the difference between Theism and Deism, I said that theism believes in a God revealed in nature as not

merely Creator, but as Preserver and Governor of things. I did not in any sense call nature God, but spoke of God as *revealed* in nature. I afterwards explained at some length the way in which He is revealed in nature, and showed that when we say we find Him there, we mean we find Him as we find another man's mind, through the indications in his body. This is theism.

The word pantheism is used very vaguely and loosely, but when it has any distinctive meaning at all, it means simply the belief that nature is God. A consistent pantheist is a man who holds, not that one is to find God as a something distinct from nature and seen through nature, but that one is to look upon nature itself as God. Evidently, such a man cannot think that God is inferred from the whole of things as his neighbor's mind is inferred from the actions of his body. Evidently, the whole argument which has to do with the search for minds, and the application

of this reasoning to the search for God is quite useless to the pantheist. He can see a good deal of the world directly. If this is God, then he can see God at once, and needs no process of inference. But it follows that God is not, then, a mind or anything like a mind, beyond his own and revealed to it as minds are revealed. One does not thus see other minds. More than this: the emotions of love and veneration, which naturally arise when one mind feels itself in relation to another, have no logical place in the mind of the pantheist. What one loves is a person, and if one calls up in himself this emotion in the presence of what he does not recognize as anything like a person, in the plain common sense of that word, then he must have deceived himself into having the emotion through some unwarranted association of ideas with the words which he is using, or through some want of clearness in his thought. The very use of the word God is likely to call up religious

emotion, from the rich associations of the word, and from what it naturally suggests to the man who pronounces it. If the pantheist keeps calling the world God, he may educate himself into a very high respect for the world, but after all it is only the world, and the name does not add anything to it. It does not imply the discovery that the word God in its natural and common sense may properly be applied to it. Some so-called pantheists have, to be sure, been very religious men, but they seem to have had a capacity, like the four Jews under Nebuchadnezzar, of thriving on very little. In so far as they have really been pantheists, and not merely somewhat inconsistent theists, they have had no right to be religious at all in the ordinary sense of the term. And in so far as their thinking has given them a right to what we call religion, it has been simply some form of theism.

Lord Tennyson's little poem on "The Higher Pantheism" presents a self-con-

tradictory title; for where this way of thinking is really pantheism it is not "higher," and where it is "higher" it is not pantheism. It is the theistic element in it which appeals to religious emotion.

"The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains,—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

"Is not the Vision He? Tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?"

* * * * * * * * *

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet,—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

The pantheist, if he is to be consistent, and if he is to differ at all from the theist, must repudiate this last couplet altogether, or use the words in new and vague senses. If God is simply the world and nothing more, He cannot hear any more than a

dead body, nor can Spirit meet with Spirit in any sense at all. What we are to speak to in such a case is simply

> "The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains,"

and speaking becomes no longer desirable or significant. Nor can we be much stirred by reflection upon "the Vision of Him who reigns" if we keep in mind that this is simply saying over again what has been said in the line just quoted, and adds nothing at all to the thought. We are tricked out of the emotion which properly hovers around capital letters, and forget for the moment that there is no such thing as "reigning" after this fashion.

From all this it is evident that the view of God which I have presented as reasonable cannot in any proper sense of that term be called pantheism. It is all the difference between soul and no soul in the system of things. This view does not say that God is nature, but that God is seen

through nature in just the way that any mind is revealed to any other mind. It insists that one should use common justice in arguing about God, and ask oneself at each step in the argument whether one would argue in the same way about one's fellow-man. The man who holds this view distinguishes between the body of his friend and the mind of his friend, and realizes, that if he could be quite sure that a mind had ceased to be connected with that body, his attitude towards it would be very different from what it is now. In like manner, when he looks upon the world, he believes that he finds revealed in it something analogous to the mind that is revealed in his friend. He does not confound this with the world itself any more than he confounds his friend's mind with his body. It is this something which he has inferred that he calls God, and it is this that is the object of his religious emotion. Should he come to believe that there are not in the world marks of mind

analogous to the marks of mind discovered in a human body, he would have to confess that he has no longer a God in the sense in which he has all along used the word. He does not in the least believe, taking those words in their usual meaning, that nature is God. I think I have made sufficiently plain my answer to the question whether this view does not make nature God.

And now for the question, whether it does not make the world as it were the body of God, and whether this is not a startling idea? It must be at once admitted that we are not accustomed to talking in this way. We may go farther and say that it is undesirable to talk in this way. One may hold that the relation of God to the world has in it something analogous to the relation of man's mind to his body, and yet one may hold at the same time that the similarity is not so close that it justifies one in applying to the world this term. The word body has all

sorts of associations in our minds which make us hesitate, very properly, to apply it in this case. We think, when we use the word, of a certain shape and structure, and of certain functions, which belong to our bodies as animal bodies, but which are not found in the system of things taken as a whole, and should not be associated with that whole. The trouble here is in the word and its associations. If we lay the word aside, and keep in mind the thought, that what is meant is simply that God is revealed by the world as a whole in a manner analogous to that in which a man's mind is revealed by the little mass of matter that we call his body, there is nothing in the thought that is startling or even new. The thought has been realized dimly by many, and with some clearness by a few. It is simply the belief in a present God, and nothing more.

Of course this should be expressed so as to avoid misunderstanding. A rose by

any other name will quite possibly not smell as sweet. The names given to things affect very much our opinions of the things. It is quite possible to arouse in a mind opposition to views in themselves not at all calculated to arouse opposition, by giving those views an unjust or misleading name. The unthinking are very apt to rest in the name, and not to go on to a careful consideration of the thought itself; and even the thinking man, who is concerned chiefly with thoughts and not words, may find it difficult to shake off the associations which an unfortunate name will call up. So avoid expressing this view of God, and of His presence in the world, in a way which will mislead yourself and others. Avoid using words which seem strange and unaccustomed. Of one thing you may be quite sure, and that is, that when this view is expressed in such a way as to be really understood, it will meet with no opposition from men of a religious mind, who have always believed

just this, and have found God about them in the world of to-day. If clearly apprehended, this view will be welcomed as marking out theism from deism on the one hand and pantheism on the other.

CHAPTER VI.

The Reign of Law in Nature.

It remains to consider in this and the following chapter two or three objections which it is supposed can be justly urged from the point of view of modern science against the argument for God. The first is from the reign of natural law.

I have some distance back called attention to the fact that the marvels of the "Arabian Nights," which seem so natural and so absorbing to the mind of the child, fail to interest the grown man, because they seem unreal and unreasonable. He regards them as unnatural and in their nature incredible, and the flights of the undisciplined imagination no longer please. The view of nature as arbitrary and always surprising, which is natural to a child without much experience of nature, has given place in the mind of an intelligent man to

a view of nature as a system of things having a certain fixed order and obeying certain laws. Gradually there has emerged from the chaos of his first unconnected experiences a consciousness of regularity and causal connection. He no longer looks upon anything and everything as possible, but he looks for what he has come to regard as natural, and he looks for it because he believes there are in nature causes which would regularly produce it. Where there are such causes he usually believes the effect will follow without fail, and where there are not such causes he believes that it will not happen. The description of the way in which causes in nature produce their effects he calls natural law, and he does not often expect any natural law to have exceptions which may not be explained through the action of some other natural law. In other words, he has grown to have a tendency to regard the order of nature as fixed and invariable.

The childhood of the race resembles

that of the individual in its way of looking at nature. It is only little by little that the view taken by science has come to be accepted at all. Nature is so complex and her forces so variously combined that it is by no means easy to see that the same causes always produce the same effects, and that the order of things is throughout invariable. That there is an order we can see easily enough, and that in general causes and effects follow each other according to rule, but it must be confessed that we have not yet so measured and weighed and compared all things as to be able to say, except by way of a guess, that there are no exceptions to these rules, but that all that happens happens according to natural law and as a necessary result of what has preceded it. Perhaps the majority of men still hold that the reign of law is not strictly universal, and that a complete knowledge would reveal in nature what cannot be made to fall under the dominion of law; but, on the

other hand, many minds have been so impressed with what has been thus far gained in the way of exact knowledge of causes and effects, as to look forward with confidence to a time when the increase of knowledge will show that all things without exception are bound by what has been called natural necessity, and come and go only according to the fixed methods known as natural laws. Of course science, of whose very essence it is to detect uniformities and rules in nature, must assume, if only as a working theory, that all things come under law; but whether this view taken by science is right or not is a question which science cannot settle until human knowledge is complete.

While men have been reducing the occurrences of nature as a whole to system and discovering law, they have been discovering that that little fragment of nature which we call a man is not a merely arbitrary and lawless thing, but that he seems at least to some degree to fall under the

dominion of law like other things. His body certainly acts and reacts like other animal bodies, and the science of medicine is based on the assumption that its ways of acting will be regular and constant. If there were not a certain sequence and plan in the unfolding of his mind, no mental science would be possible. And when we consider that much discussed and quarrelled over faculty, the human will, we must all admit that we do not act towards men as though we regarded this element in them as purely arbitrary and subject to no law at all. We use persuasion in hopes of moving the will, and we threaten punishment in hopes of frightening it into submission. We recognize certain motives as naturally inducing to certain actions; and we often regard actions, at first glance apparently inexplicable, as sufficiently explained when we discover the motives which must have influenced the doer. When we say that it is natural that a man should act in this way or that or

choose this or that, we indicate by the very use of the word "natural" that human actions are in some way to be accounted for, and are to be looked upon as at least in part natural results of what has preceded.

There are some who believe that the subjection of man's will to natural law is only partial, and that the previous state of his mind and the motives brought to bear on it will not completely account for all he chooses and does; on the other hand, there are those who believe that what seems inexplicable in men's actions is not at all to be referred to a will free in such a sense as to break the uniformities of nature, but to be referred to our ignorance of the forces which are actually working within and around men. If we knew all, they say, we could see that man's actions are fixed and subject to law. Evidently this dispute cannot be settled in the present stage of our knowledge by an appeal to observation, for man is so compli-

cated and intricate a being, that no one yet knows with sufficient exactitude the forces which are bound up in him to state with any certainty whether their regular action will account for all he does or not. It will probably be long before the dispute will be settled by an appeal to experience.

Now, I am not at all concerned just here with the question whether they are right who believe that the reign of natural law in external nature and in man is universal and without exceptions, or they who believe that the order of nature is not so fixed that it cannot be and is not set aside by something which does not fall into the chain of causes and effects. This question is a very interesting one in itself; but I am now discussing the argument for God, and what interests me here is the question: How would it affect the argument for God, or would it affect it at all, if nature, including man, were found to be subject to fixed and unvarying law? Would it do away with God? or necessa-

rily change our view of Him as in close personal relations with us? The question is a living one, for there are many persons who think that God is revealed as breaking in upon the order of nature rather than as acting in and through that natural order, and who are inclined to believe that a view which sees in all nature an unbroken regularity does away with God altogether.

In answering this question I will ask you to keep clearly in mind the argument for God as it has been presented. You remember that it was said that we pass from all nature to God very much as we pass by inference from man's body and its actions to man's mind. It was insisted that the search for minds always takes place in the same general way, whether the mind sought be a small one or a very great one. But if the reasoning which leads us to infer man's mind and that which leads us to infer God are in their nature similar, any view of things which applies equally to man's body and to the

whole of nature must affect the two arguments in the same way. If such a view makes it impossible to infer a God, it must make it impossible to infer another man's mind; and if it does not destroy the argument for human minds it should not destroy the argument for God.

Now, if we have reason to think that the laws of nature are uniform and invariable, and everything happens according to natural necessity, then of course we have reason to think that man is subject to this natural necessity too. We must look upon every word we hear him utter and every motion we see him make as a necessary result of what has preceded, and in no sense arbitrary or spontaneous. If we knew all the natural forces at work in him and around him, and had some skill in computation, we could predict his words and acts as we can predict that an egg will be broken before we have seen it touch the ground. Suppose all this to be so. Would we think that this human body in front of

us, now speaking wisely and acting reasonably, does not reveal mind, merely because there is nothing irregular and lawless in these words and actions? Would we doubt that a long series of benevolent acts indicated a kindly spirit, even if these acts were persisted in with the greatest regularity? Does it follow, because the bodily signs of a man's thought occur in an orderly manner to be explained by reference to the general laws of the world, that they are no longer signs of his thought? The argument which proved them to be such is not at all affected by their being constant and regular.

If we refer to our experience of men, we do not find that that increasing knowledge of human nature which leads us to look upon the unknown element in men as a diminishing quantity, and to have a growing expectation that such and such human actions will in general follow as a consequence of such and such motives,— we do not find that this increasing knowl-

edge of human nature as a thing at least to some degree subject to uniform laws has had any tendency to make us believe that men's bodies do not reveal their minds. Nor do we any the less believe those minds to be revealed as wise or unwise, good or bad.

And when we observe those who have gone over to the extreme view that everything in man, without exception, is subject to natural necessity, we find that even they are not in the least inclined to give up a belief in other men's minds as revealed through their bodies. Such people marry and are given in marriage like any one else. They love their children, and believe that they are loved by them in return. They have their friendships and their intimacies and their enmities like other people. They do not hesitate to use persuasion with their fellows, and when they prefer a request, they look for it to be granted. In all this they do not see any infringement of natural law, and they would maintain

that if it is found that one mind can be revealed to another mind and in any way influence its action, the description of the way in which minds thus interact may properly be called a natural law, and accepted as an undoubted truth. Their belief seems in no way to change their practical attitude towards those about them, or to make their social relations less close and intimate.

I ask then, why, if the doctrine of the uniformity of nature's methods does not affect one's belief in the mind which is revealed by that small part of nature called a human body, it should affect one's belief in the one great Mind revealed in every part of nature? Surely there is no reason for this unjust discrimination in favor of man.

Should it be said that this view would at least destroy all belief in the efficacy of prayer as influencing the order of events; I answer, not at all, unless it would also destroy the possibility of believing that

one may ask a man a favor and have him grant it because asked. If the latter can be looked upon as natural, so can the former. And in just the same sense. In both cases it is simply a question of fact. Are favors granted and prayers answered, or are they not? What has the uniformity of nature to do with the question?

CHAPTER VII.

The Eternity of Matter and the Doctrine of Evolution.

JUST as in the last chapter it did not fall within my purpose to decide whether the reign of law is universal or subject to exceptions, so in the present chapter it does not concern me to decide whether matter and force are eternal or not, or whether the doctrine of evolution is to be accepted or not. I merely propose to consider briefly how it would affect our argument for God if these questions were to be decided in the affirmative. This, I should think, ought to be of interest even for those who have little fear that the final answers to the questions will be in the affirmative. The White Knight had a mouse-trap fastened to his saddle, as he believed it would be very disagreeable to have mice running about on the back of

his horse, and yet he freely admitted that it was highly improbable that mice should be found in that peculiar situation. It was well, he thought, to be quite secure. And since the beliefs that matter and force are eternal and indestructible, and that the doctrine of evolution is to be accepted as true, are sufficiently common beliefs in our day, and many men believe that they are gradually collecting evidence which will prove these beliefs well grounded, it would certainly be more agreeable for the man who is watching the efforts to collect such evidence to feel sure that, whatever the event, it will not rob him of God, than to fear that his belief can stand only in case these investigators fail to establish theirs. If he sees that the argument for God remains whether these questions are answered in the one way or the other, or remain unanswered, he is not tempted to look with sourness on sincere efforts to increase human knowledge, and he can await with patience and an open mind the

results of an honest inquiry. I shall try in a very few words to show that the solution of these problems, most interesting in themselves, is in no way of vital importance to the argument for God.

Stated plainly, the doctrine of the eternity of matter and force means simply that the system of things of which we are a part has not had a beginning in time, but has always existed, and passed through its series of changes according to certain uniform methods. The whole amount of matter and force in the world is neither increased nor diminished, but only undergoes certain changes in form. As I have already discussed the question whether the uniformity and regularity of nature's methods can affect the argument for God, it remains only to inquire whether that argument can be affected by the denial of a beginning to this series of natural changes.

Now, it is evident that if a man's argument for God can find Him only as a result of a regress from effect to cause, and

from that to its cause, and so on up to the cause which limits the whole series,—that is, only by going back to the creation of things,—it is evident that, if this is his only way of arriving at God, in the denial of a beginning of things he loses his God. And since the deist, as I have shown, tries to find God in just this way, he cannot hold to the eternity of the world and go on believing in God too.

But if, on the other hand, one finds God in the world here and now, as does the theist, and does not think it necessary to go back to the past for evidence of his existence, it is not easy to see how the doctrine of the eternity of the world can affect his belief. If the system of things reveals God now and always, the answer to the question how long the world has existed will also be the answer to the question how long God has been revealed in the world, but it will have nothing to do with the question *whether* He is revealed there or not. I ask you again to

reason about this great Mind with the common sense and common justice that you use in reasoning about men's minds. Suppose we find in a man's walk and conversation evidences of thought and intelligence. Would our discovery of the fact that there had been indications of thought in him for a long time in the past make him seem less rational to us in the present? We can conceive, though of course we cannot believe, that he did not begin to reveal mind at a certain definite time, but always existed much as he does now. Would that at all affect the question whether his mind is revealed? Would we not, if we came to such a belief concerning him, simply add to our present opinion that his mind is revealed, the opinion that it always has been revealed? And if the world has always existed, and has always been full of evidences of reason, does this not simply mean that there has always been a revelation of God, and that it has not merely dated from a certain

time in the past? If I insist that a mind exists, and point in proof to plain indications of it, it can hardly be regarded as a refutation of my position to maintain that the series of indications is a much longer one than I had supposed. We have in our books on Logic a pet name for refutations of this blundering nature.

And now to turn to the doctrine of evolution and its significance for theism. It is well to remember that evolution means simply an unfolding. It is the doctrine that what is has succeeded what was according to certain uniform methods. It does not imply that the later and higher has been *in* the earlier and lower in any strict sense of the word in; nor does it imply that the high is not high, because it has been preceded by the lower. We all accept the fact that Sir Isaac Newton began life as an almost bodiless, and certainly almost mindless, human infant. Our knowledge of what he was once does not diminish our respect for what

he became later. And the theory that the present condition of things has succeeded the past according to uniform law should not in itself lessen our appreciation of what the world is now or of what it has been. The world is what it is, and the evolution question is but one of method: How did the world get to be what it is?

But whether there has been a gradual unfolding of the system of nature according to uniform methods, or whether there have been breaks in its history, does not the argument for God stand just the same? If the evolutionist shows that things are brought about with regularity and by means nicely adjusted to attain their ends, does this prove that nature no longer reveals a mind? does it make things look irrational? The question, you see, is after all one that has been answered already in the decision that constancy and uniformity in actions do not prevent their being a revelation of mind. If the world

reveals reason and the unfolding of nature seems according to plan, then the fact that we can observe uniformities and discover laws proves only that God is not revealed as arbitrary. It cannot prove that He is not revealed at all.

There is, so far as I can see, only one way in which the student of natural science may refute our argument for God. If he ever succeeds in proving that nature is irrational, and that things do not reveal mind, he will have answered the argument. Whatever else he may succeed in proving, unless he establish this, he leaves the argument untouched.

CHAPTER VIII.

Conclusion.

In the foregoing pages I have tried to make clear that the argument for God is simply the natural argument for a mind revealed in the system of things, and I have dwelt upon the fact that this argument is not to be regarded as subject to objections which may not be urged with equal force against the arguments for other minds. Throughout I have insisted upon the necessity of keeping in mind the analogy between the argument for God and the reasoning which convinces us of the existence of minds in other men. In the light of this analogy, objections to the argument from the reign of natural law, from the eternity of the world, and from the doctrine of evolution have been seen to be quite aside from the point at issue.

And it will be well to remember that we

may very possibly get help in any new difficulties which may meet us in reflecting upon the idea of God, if we will adhere closely to this thought. If, for example, we come upon some new problem which we cannot solve, and which throws us into confusion, it will be well to ask ourselves whether a similar difficulty does not meet us when we think about the revelation of any mind to any other. If it does, and if, nevertheless, we feel justified in going on believing in other men's minds, we should go on believing in God. This looking for the difficulty in the case of human minds may not solve the problem, but it will at least show us that it is a much broader one than we had thought, and it may strongly incline us not to believe it incapable of solution.

I will show what I mean by taking an instance. You ask me: Where is this God of whom we have been talking all along? I answer: I will try to tell you, just as soon as you have told me where I

will find the mind—not the body, but the mind—of another man. Difficulties which apply equally to every case in which one mind is revealed to another cannot be regarded as peculiarly objections to the argument for God.

Now that my argument is finished, I would say that all through this little book I have used words in their usual senses, and have remained upon what has been called the ground of the common understanding. I have made use of such phrases as "the world without us," "cause and effect," "revealed in nature," "other minds," and many more, without discussing them more than was necessary to bring you to see the force of my argument. But the philosopher delights in a microscopic analysis of just such phrases. He would by no means think his task finished if he should read what I have written, and having gotten to the end, should find that he agreed with its conclusions. He would in all probability set

to work to write a much larger book than mine, full of hair-splitting distinctions on the subject of "self" and "not-self," and queries as to how one mind can be conscious of another, or whether spirits can be said to be anywhere at all. He would certainly find many questions to ask, and he would probably have to leave some of them unanswered.

Into this debatable land it has been no part of my purpose to penetrate. If the reasoning of the previous chapters is good, a further analysis may serve to make what is dim and vague in it clear and exact, but it cannot do away with any part of it. In this reflection those who are not philosophers may rest content. The interest of most men in the argument for God is a practical one and concerns common life. For common life, the ground of the common understanding, if it is solid ground, is good enough.